

**Virginia Commission for the Arts**  
**Minutes, June 14-15, 2007**  
**Winchester**

Members Present: Dr. Lucius Ellsworth, Chair; David Briggs, Nick Covatta, Susan Hirschbiel, Bonita Lestina, Rod Taylor, Beth Temple, Will Trinkle, Deborah Valentine, and Vaughan Webb

Members Absent: Maria Laqueur, Jackie Stone, and Eve Wilson

Staff Present: Peggy Baggett, Foster Billingsley, and Cathy Welborn

Guests: Janet Davis, Shenandoah University; Dennis Lynch, Shenandoah Valley Music Festival; Vonderene Swigart, Winchester Little Theatre; Karen Majorov, Winchester Little Theatre

**Introduction**

Lu Ellsworth, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:25 a.m. He welcomed the Commissioners to Winchester and thanked the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley for hosting the first day of the meeting.

David Briggs made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 28-29 meeting. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

**Status of State Budget**

Peggy Baggett distributed materials and reported on the status of the 2007-08 state budget. State tax collections are not meeting the projected revenue targets. The Office of the Governor is re-forecasting revenues for the upcoming fiscal year and will make a report in late August to the General Assembly. State agencies will be notified in the fall of any necessary actions to bring the state budget into balance.

**State Advocacy Efforts**

Lu Ellsworth reported on a meeting with Secretary of Education about Commission funding for 2008-2010. Members of the Commission were encouraged to talk to the Governor and their representatives in the General Assembly about funding for the arts.

**State of the Arts in Virginia**

Peggy Baggett gave a report on the state of the arts in Virginia from her perspective, and a general discussion followed in which the following points were made.

- The impact of the baby boomers leaving the field could be enormous, particularly for organizations losing their founders. The Commission should investigate the New York State Council for the Arts succession grant program. The Commission should encourage boards of directors to undertake succession planning.
- The Commission should continue encouraging its grantees to do serious strategic

- planning and should expand its list of qualified management consultants.
- It is critical to find new major donors for the arts as corporate and foundation philanthropy changes.

## **2007-08 Grants Budget**

Peggy Baggett reviewed the staff recommendations for changes in the 2007-08 grants budget approved by the Commission in December of 2006. The Commissioners agreed with the proposed changes, contingent upon actions on the individual grant requests.

## **Area I General Operating Support**

Lu Ellsworth had observed the Area I panel meeting. He stated that the panelists had an active and constructive discussion about the applications. Cathy Welborn presented the panel and staff recommendations on the applications from Area I.

**Birthplace of Country Music Alliance.** Peggy Baggett reported on her meeting with the Director and President of this organization following the advisory panel meeting. Although there has been a split within this organization in the past year, the Birthplace still meets the criteria for General Operating Support funding. The organization will be directed to use the long form application in the spring of 2008 and be reviewed by the advisory panel.

**Carter Family Memorial Music Center.** The future direction of this organization is not clear as it adjusts to the loss of its founder. The organization will be directed to use the long form application in the spring of 2008 and be reviewed by the advisory panel.

David Briggs made a motion to approve the staff recommendations for the General Operating Support applications from Area I. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

## **Area I Project Grants**

**The Crooked Road.** The Commissioners expressed enthusiasm about the future of The Crooked Road. There were many questions and concerns about the project as described in the application. They decided not to fund the Project Grant request but later in the meeting approved a \$5,000 Special Recognition Award to show support for The Crooked Road with Vaughan Webb abstaining.

Deborah Valentine made a motion to approve the staff recommendations for the Area I Project Grants. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

## **Area II General Operating Support**

Vaughan Webb had observed the Area II panel meeting. He stated that the panelists had done an admirable job. Cathy Welborn presented the panel and staff recommendations on the applications.

**Academy of Fine Arts.** David Briggs noted that this applicant had been funded at a Priority 2 level in 2006-07 and that the panel comments did not give the impression that the issues from the

previous year had been addressed. Nick Covatta expressed concern about the slow progress of the capital campaign and the impact on the ongoing operations of the organization. After discussion Susan Hirschbiel made a motion to accept the panel and staff recommendation of Priority 1 funding. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Susan Hirschbiel made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the remaining General Operating Support applications from Area II. The motion was seconded and approved, 9-Yes, 1-No.

## **Area II Project Grants**

**Future of the Piedmont Foundation.** The Commissioners reviewed a letter from the applicant responding to the panel comments. David Briggs then made a motion to award a Project of \$1,000 with the use of the funds restricted to need-based scholarships. Nick Covatta offered an amendment to the motion to award \$1,500. The amendment was accepted. The motion was then seconded and approved unanimously.

Beth Temple made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the remaining Project Grant applications from Area II. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

## **Area III General Operating Support**

Cathy Welborn presented the panel and staff recommendations on the applications. No Commissioners had observed the meeting, but she reported that the panelists had been well prepared and had different points of view.

**Rockingham Ballet Theatre.** Susan Hirschbiel asked if the Commission should fund this organization without clear evidence that it is not primarily private dance instruction. She recommended that the organization be directed to use the long form application in the spring of 2008, addressing the panel concerns.

Will Trinkle made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the Area III General Operating Support applications. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

## **Area III Project Grants**

**Blacksburg Master Chorale.** David Briggs noted that the organization is requesting a Project Grant for its entire season and should be directed to apply in the General Operating Support category next year.

**Eastern Mennonite University for the Shenandoah Valley Bach Festival.** It was noted that the Commission has funded some aspect of the Festival in four of the past five years. The Festival staff should be told that future applications should be for new initiatives rather than for a different guest artist each year.

**Eastern Mennonite University for the Shenandoah Preparatory Music Program.** The Commissioners noted this request was for a fourth year of expansion of the program. They agreed with the panel that the program is a high quality and valuable service to the community. The Project Grant category is not designed for ongoing support. David Briggs made a motion

not to award funding for this application. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

David Briggs made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the remaining Project Grant applications from Area III. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

#### **Area IVA General Operating Support**

David Briggs commented that the first day of the panel meeting had been superb with a knowledgeable and balanced panel and an excellent discussion. Bonita Lestina commented on the high standards shown by the panelists. Beth Temple noted that the second day of the panel meeting had also gone well.

**City of Fairfax Band.** Bonita Lestina spoke of the excellent quality of the music and the outreach into the community. After discussion about the auditioning process and financial management questions, David Briggs made a motion to award funding as a Priority 1 organization with the organization being required to use the long form again in the spring of 2008. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

**Springwater Fiber Workshop.** Beth Temple made a motion to approve the staff recommendation of no funding. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

**Vienna Art Society.** Bonita Lestina commented that the application did not adequately reflect the impact of the organization on the community. After a discussion of whether the organization exists primarily to serve its membership or to serve the community at large, she made a motion to approve funding as a Priority 2 organization. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

**Virginia Chamber Orchestra.** David Briggs noted that he has an association with the organization and would abstain from voting on its application. Nick Covatta made a motion to approve the staff recommendation for the Virginia Chamber Orchestra. The motion was seconded and passed, 9-Yes with David Briggs abstaining.

Will Trinkle made a motion to approve the staff recommendations for the remaining General Operating Support applications from Area IVA. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

#### **Area IVA Project Grants**

David Briggs made a motion to accept the staff recommendations on the Project Grant applications from Area IVA. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

#### **Area IVB General Operating Support**

No Commissioners had observed the Area IVB panel. Cathy Welborn reported that the panelists had first hand knowledge of many of the applicants and that it was a good meeting.

Bonita Lestina made a motion to accept the staff recommendations on the General Operating Support Grant applications from Area IVB. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

## **Area IVB Project Grants**

David Briggs made a motion to accept the staff recommendations on the Project Grant applications from Area IVB. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

## **Area V General Operating Support**

No Commissioners had observed the Area V panel. Cathy Welborn reported that the panel meeting had gone well overall.

**Paramount Theatre.** After a discussion of the panel concerns about this organization, Will Trinkle made a motion to approve a General Operating Support grant of \$10,000. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Susan Hirschbiel made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the remaining General Operating Support applications from Area V.

## **Area V Project Grants**

**Albemarle-Charlottesville Regional Jail.** David Briggs stated that the idea of using the arts as a rehabilitation tool was intriguing. David Briggs made a motion to award \$4,000 for the project. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

David Briggs made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the remaining applications from Area V. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

## **Area VI General Operating Support**

Susan Hirschbiel commented the Area VI panel had been one of the strongest that she had observed, although two of the panelists had seemed overwhelmed by the workload. Rod Taylor concurred and praised the level of detail in the panel comments. Nick Covatta remarked that the discussion had been lively but that the panel reached consensus on most of the applications. Cathy Welborn then presented the panel and staff recommendations.

**North Street Playhouse.** Nick Covatta noted that he had a conflict of interest on this application. David Briggs made a motion to approve the panel and staff recommendations on the application. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

**TodiMusicFest.** Several Commissioners expressed concern about the financial situation of this applicant and the attendance at performances. There was agreement that the organization should be directed to use the long form application again in the spring of 2008.

**Virginia Handbell Consort.** The Commission deferred discussion on this application until the applications to be listed in the Tour Directory had been reviewed. The Commissioners watched the DVD provided with the application to be listed in the Tour Directory and discussed the artistic quality of the ensemble and whether the ensemble gave the appearance of being a religious organization. At that point the Commissioners returned to the General Operating Support application, and Susan Hirschbiel made a motion to award funding at Priority 2. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

David Briggs made a motion to accept the staff recommendations on the remaining General Operating Support applications from Area VI. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

### **Area VI Project Grants**

**Eastern Shore Community College.** David Briggs made a motion to award \$3,500 for the project. The motion was accepted and approved, 9-Yes with Nick Covatta abstaining.

**Williamsburg Area Chamber of Commerce.** The Commissioners agreed by consensus to accept the staff recommendation on this application with the condition that the funding will not be released unless the Commission logo appears on the map.

Susan Hirschbiel made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the remaining applications for Project Grants from Area VI. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

### **Major Arts Institutions**

Peggy Baggett reported that Maria Laqueur had observed the major arts institutions panel meeting and that there had been a positive discussion at the meeting since the applicants are in much better financial health than in recent years. Cathy Welborn presented the panel and staff recommendations.

**Virginia Symphony.** The Commissioners discussed the long term deficit of the Virginia Symphony and the apparent lack of progress in addressing this issue. For the past two years the Commission has made submission of a deficit reduction plan a condition of funding. The plans have been submitted in a timely manner, but there is no evidence of a reduction in the deficit. After the Commissioners discussed several alternatives, Nick Covatta made a motion to set aside Priority 1 funding for the Virginia Symphony with no payments made until there is evidence of a 10% reduction in the deficit. If this reduction is not accomplished within six months, the Executive Committee is authorized to reduce the grant from Priority 1 funding to Priority 2 with the first grant payment to be made at that time. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Susan Hirschbiel noted that she had a conflict of interest with both the **Contemporary Art Center** and the **Chrysler Museum**. David Briggs made a motion to approve the panel and staff recommendations for the Contemporary Art Center of Virginia and the Chrysler Museum. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

David Briggs noted that he had a conflict of interest with the **Fairfax Symphony**. Rod Taylor made a motion to approve the panel and staff recommendations for the Fairfax Symphony. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Will Trinkle made a motion to accept the staff recommendations on the remaining applications in the major arts institutions category. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

### **General Operating Support for Local Arts Agencies**

Peggy Baggett reviewed the panel review process for the two applications and presented the panel recommendations.

**Loudoun Arts Council.** David Briggs expressed concern that the Loudoun Arts Council had been recommended for Priority 1 funding by the Area IVB panel in the spring of 2006 but had been recommended for Priority 3 funding by the statewide local arts agency panel. He made a motion to award funding as a Priority 2 organization. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

David Briggs then made a motion to accept the panel and staff recommendation on the application from the Arts Council of Richmond. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

### **Special Recognition Awards**

Susan Hirschbiel questioned the staff recommendation of awarding \$10,000 each to the Blue Ridge Institute of Ferrum College and Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, noting that the money would have more impact for the Blue Ridge Institute. Nick Covatta made a motion to approve the staff recommendations. The motion was seconded and passed, 9-yes with Vaughan Webb abstaining.

Susan Hirschbiel then made a motion to award \$10,000 to The Crooked Road. After discussion David Briggs made an amendment to the motion to award \$5,000. The amended motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

### **General Operating Support Short Form Applications**

Peggy Baggett explained the short form application process and presented the staff recommendations.

**Neighborhood School of the Arts.** This applicant had notified the Commission staff that the board was evaluating the future of the organization. The Commission staff recommended setting aside funds for a Priority 1 General Operating Support grant but not sending a grant award letter until the organization writes to the Commission with plans for the coming year.

**Peninsula Fine Arts Center and Virginia Ballet Theatre.** Peggy Baggett explained that these two organizations were not in compliance with the Commission requirement of sending copies of an annual audit of their financial records. She recommended making the funding to the two organizations contingent upon the Commission receiving the appropriate audit documents.

**Pro Art Association.** Lu Ellsworth noted that he serves on the board of directors and asked Will Trinkle to chair the meeting for this vote. Susan Hirschbiel made a motion to award Priority 1 funding. The motion was seconded and approved 9-Yes with Lu Ellsworth abstaining.

**Signature Theatre.** David Briggs noted that he serves on the board of directors. Susan Hirschbiel made a motion to award Priority 1 funding. The motion was seconded and approved, 9-Yes with David Briggs abstaining.

**Virginia Arts Festival.** Susan Hirschbiel noted that she serves on the board of directors. David Briggs made a motion to award Priority 1 funding. The motion was seconded and approved, 9-Yes with Susan Hirschbiel abstaining.

David Briggs then made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the remaining short form General Operating Support applications.

### **Local Government Challenge Grants**

David Briggs made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the Local Government Challenge Grants. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

### **Applications To Be Listed in the 2008-09 Tour Directory**

No Commissioners had observed the touring panel meeting. Cathy Welborn presented the panel and staff recommendations.

**Dixie Bee Liners.** Vaughan Webb noted that the Dixie Bee Liners are high quality performers and that the marketing materials are clear that the ensemble is not a traditional Appalachian performing ensemble. He made a motion to include the Dixie Bee Liners in the Tour Directory with a funding allocation of \$3,000. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

**Virginia Handbell Consort.** The Commissioners watched the DVD provided with the application to be listed in the Tour Directory and discussed the artistic quality of the ensemble and whether the ensemble gave the appearance of being a religious organization. Bonita Lestina then made a motion to put the ensemble in the Tour Directory with a funding allocation of \$2,000. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

**Slash Coleman.** Nick Covatta made a motion to include Slash Coleman in the Tour Directory with a funding allocation of \$2,000. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Deborah Valentine made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the remaining applications to be included in the 2008-09 Tour Directory. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

### **Artist Residency Grants**

Rod Taylor reported that the panel meeting had gone well but that there were serious concerns about the applications involving the Kid Pan Alley program. Deborah Valentine concurred with his comments about the panel meeting.

**Applications Involving Kid Pan Alley.** Rod Taylor explained the panel concerns about the apparent lack of involvement of the schools in planning these residencies. Lu Ellsworth spoke about the high quality of the Kid Pan Alley programs that had taken place in southwest Virginia. After discussion the Commissioners agreed by consensus to fund these applications for 2007-08 and to have the Commission's Arts in Education Committee review the format of the Kid Pan Alley program to determine if it fits into the Commission residency guidelines.

**Kenmore Middle School.** Peggy Baggett reported that an advisory panelist had raised some



concerns about this application and that the Commission staff needed more time to investigate these concerns. David Briggs made a motion to set aside \$7,500 for the residency with the Commission staff authorized to make the final decision of whether to award funds, based upon additional information. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

**Southwest Virginia Community College.** Peggy Baggett presented alternative proposals from the staff of the Community College to amend the residency from reaching four Tazewell County high schools to reaching three or two. David Briggs spoke in favor of the full year residency, expressed regret that it could not be funded in full, and made a motion to award \$30,050 for a residency in three of the Tazewell County high schools. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Vaughan Webb then made a motion to accept the staff recommendations on the remaining Artist Residency applications. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

### **Technology Enhancement Grants**

Foster Billingsley presented the panel and staff recommendations on the Technology Enhancement Grants. Deborah Valentine made a motion to approve the panel and staff recommendations. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

### **2008-09 Grants Budget**

The Commissioners discussed alternative uses for the unallocated grant funds. Nick Covatta made a motion to add \$11,000 to the professional development initiative with any remaining balance going into General Operating Support. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

### **Report of the Nominating Committee**

Vaughan Webb presented the report of the Nominating Committee which recommended the following slate of officers for 2007-08:

Chair	Lu Ellsworth
Vice Chair	Beth Temple
Secretary	Deborah Valentine

Lu Ellsworth asked Vice Chair Beth Temple to preside over this section of the agenda. Bonita Lestina made a motion to close the nominations. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. David Briggs made a motion to accept the slate of officers proposed by the Nominating Committee. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

### **Old and New Business**

Peggy Baggett reported that the Southern Arts Federation is considering Norfolk as the site for the 2009 Performing Arts Exchange.

Lu Ellsworth noted that the NASAA annual meeting will be in Baltimore December 6-9. He urged that as many members of the Commission as possible attend this meeting. The suggestion was made that the Commission hold its quarterly board meeting in connection with

the NASAA meeting.

Peggy Baggett praised the work of the NASAA staff and board in working with the National Endowment for the Arts to eliminate the multiple categories of the Partnership Agreement, beginning in 2008-09.

Peggy Baggett reported on the status of the Governor's Arts Awards. The current focus is on fundraising. The statewide coordinator will be hired in December of 2007. Nominations will be accepted in the spring of 2008 with the judges selecting the winners in early summer of 2008. The presentation of the Awards will be at the Executive Mansion in September of 2008 with the specific date to be confirmed in late spring of 2008.

Lu Ellsworth and Peggy Baggett reported on the meeting with representatives of the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, the Maryland State Arts Council, the D.C. Commission on the Arts & Humanities, the Cafritz Foundation, and the Meyer Foundation about possibilities for a Maryland/Washington/Virginia performing arts touring initiative. There is a wide disparity among the three jurisdictions in geographic area, history of touring, and needs; but there was agreement to continue the discussions.

Lu Ellsworth and Susan Hirschbiel reported on the meeting on May 23 with representatives of the major arts institutions. There was agreement at the meeting to support the public awareness campaign planned by the Virginians for the Arts Foundation. The group also created two task forces and has asked the Commission to provide the staffing for the task forces. One will focus on trying to raise funding from a national foundation to expand the public awareness campaign. The other will investigate the possibility of having a statewide celebration of the arts around a common theme. Susan Hirschbiel reported on her conversation with representatives of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts about the Museum getting involved in the emerging statewide network of major arts institutions.

Several Commissioners asked about the process of converting the Commission grant application process to an online format. The Commission staff described some of the challenges in making this conversion. Lu Ellsworth suggested that the Commission staff create a timeline and list of changes necessary for the conversion to be sent to the Commissioners.

The Commissioners then made suggestions for meeting locations in the coming year - Baltimore in connection with the NASAA meeting, Charlottesville, Harrisonburg, Newport News, Roanoke, and the Northern Neck.

Beth Temple then thanked the staff for their good work in preparing the meeting materials. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2 p.m.